

STEP #workHERE

Edgecombe and Nash Counties

Collaborative Case Study

“We’ve made huge strides from where we were two years ago.”

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What is Step #workHERE?

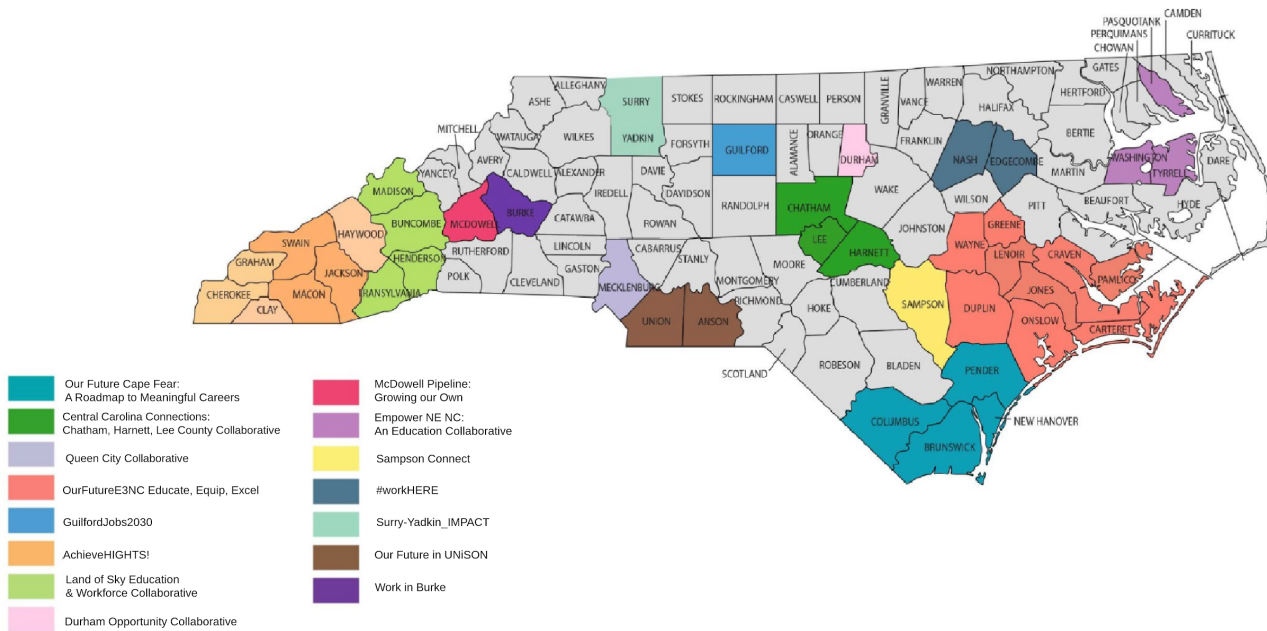
STEP #workHERE is a myFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaborative (LEAC) in Nash and Edgecombe counties working to increase elementary school literacy rates, high school completion rates for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and alignment between Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways and workforce needs in healthcare, early childhood education, and other relevant sectors. The collaborative was started by the nonprofit STEP (Strategic Twin-Counties Education Partnership) and aims to increase education attainment by up to 9 percent in both counties.





Relationships and Connections: Primary Partners

myFutureNC Local Educational Collaboratives



STEP (Strategic Twin-Counties Education Partnership)

Coordinates relevant education and career pathways agencies in Edgecombe and Nash counties with the goal of increasing educational attainment in the region.

Nash County Public Schools

Connects students with post-secondary pathways such as college and career readiness and CTE programs.

Edgecombe County Public Schools

Connects students with post-secondary pathways such as college and career readiness and CTE programs.

Edgecombe Community College

Connects students with career, education, and training pathways to ensure career readiness.

Nash Community College

Connects students with career, education, and training pathways to ensure career readiness.

Cummins Inc.

Provides an industry perspective on the increasing demand for a well-trained manufacturing workforce.





Practices and Outcomes

The LEAC, which has adopted the #workHERE hashtag to support its branding efforts, has spent the last two years deepening stakeholder relationships and setting measurable goals to increase educational attainment and career placement. “I’ve seen relationships be built through this collaborative, and we’re able to leverage resources that we previously haven’t been able to garner,” says Chad Thompson, executive director of CTE and workforce development for Nash County Public Schools. “We’ve made huge strides from where we were two years ago.”

President of Edgecombe Community College, Gregory McLeod, says, “To see various stakeholders ‘storming, norming, and performing’—that is the heavy work. We’re seeing so many more people come together, and I’m proud of that. We’re deepening everyone’s understanding of their role in guaranteeing the success of young people.”



Policies and Other Barriers

Stakeholders acknowledge the need to expand the work of STEP #workHERE, but potential partners have limited time and capacity. “We need to get everyone to own this effort in perpetuity,” says McLeod. “It can’t just be a LEAC initiative. It has to be something that everyone involved in education and workforce development champions in the years to come.” Thompson agrees that the collaborative must make the case that its work is critical to the region’s economic success. “We need to ensure our efforts are not regarded just as something extra on the side, but instead that this work is essential.”



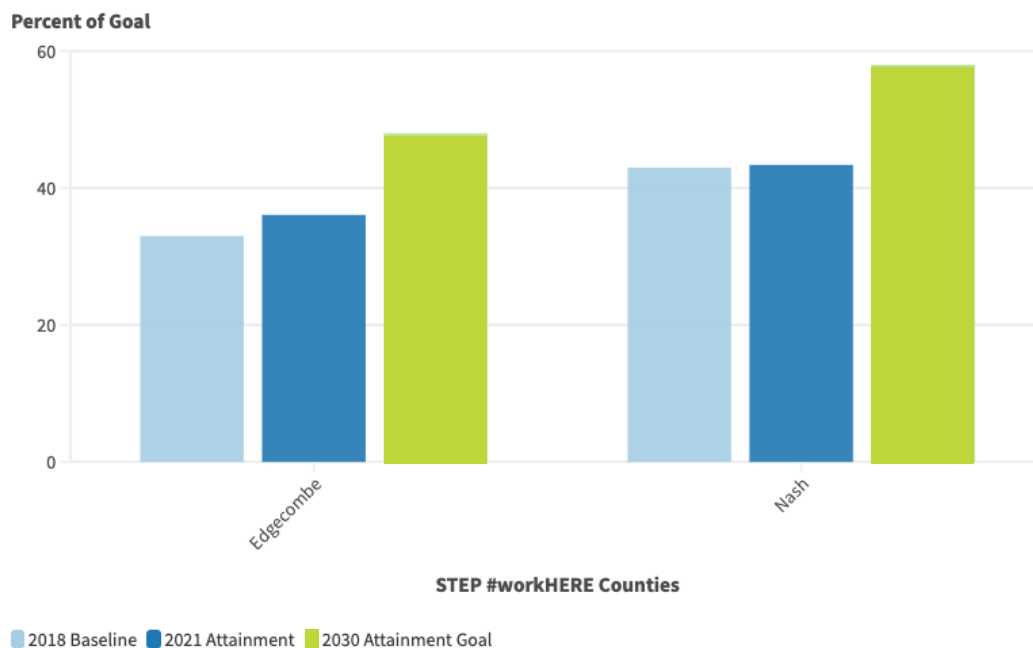
Resource Flows and Sustainability

For STEP #workHERE, sustainability started with reaching an agreement on the collaborative's goals. Those goals were designed to align with each agency's priorities so that each stakeholder would be more engaged with the collective work.

The goals include increasing student literacy rates in 3rd to 8th grade, increasing FAFSA completion rates by 21 percent over three years, and better aligning CTE pathways with local industries. The overall goal is to increase educational attainment in both Nash and Edgecombe counties over the projected attainment rate by 2030 to ensure that each county meets the local goal recommended by myFutureNC.

To ensure future success, the collaborative must continue meeting regularly and recruiting stakeholders across the K-12, college, and industrial landscape, all while connecting the collective's work with each agency's individual goals.

myFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaboratives Measuring Progress





Mental Model and Power Sharing

The City of Rocky Mount is in both Edgecombe and Nash counties, but collaborations between the two counties can be complicated. Step #workHERE has aligned educational institutions and employers across county lines in ways that reflect the region's economy.

